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SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MYANMAR (A/C.3/61/L.38/Rev.1)

Re-Introduction Statement on behalf of the European Union

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Ambassador
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New York, 22 November 2006

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the European Union and the co-sponsors listed in L.38/Rev.1, I have the honour to introduce under agenda item 67(c) the draft resolution entitled "Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar," contained in document A/61/C.3/L.38/Rev.1.

Mr. Chairperson, until last week the European Union was closely engaged with the delegation of Myanmar on this draft resolution. Our consultations were conducted in a constructive atmosphere. In addition to several bilateral meetings, the European Union had also organised consultations with other interested delegations, in particular the ASEAN countries. The co-sponsors had already reflected some of the comments of the delegation of Myanmar in the text, and expressed their willingness to work further on it in order to find a consensus. The co-sponsors were also hoping that the very recent visit of Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Gambari, to Myanmar, would have given an impetus for further positive elements for this resolution.

Myanmar's decision to break off the negotiations last week therefore came as a surprise and disappointment to us. We nevertheless went ahead, though, and tabled this revised version of the resolution to reflect some of Myanmar's comments. We are truly committed, Mr. Chairperson, to dialogue and cooperation, as this gesture amply demonstrates.

It is important to recall, however, the reasons why it is necessary for the General Assembly to address the situation of human rights in Myanmar.

It is 14 years since the UN special rapporteurs first began reporting on the situation in Myanmar, and we have seen no substantive improvements on the areas of fundamental concern to the international community. Impunity continues to prevail for serious violations of human rights, including extrajudicial killings, rape and forced labour.

Moreover, developments during the course of this year have given even more reason for alarm. As the Secretary-General, the Special Rapporteur and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs have reported, the intensive military campaigns in eastern Myanmar and the associated human rights violations against persons belonging to ethnic nationalities, have led to extensive displacement both internally and across the border during this year. Independent observers have described the situation as the worst offensive and worst humanitarian situation in a decade. It is incumbent upon the General Assembly to call for an immediate end to the targeting of civilians in the ethnic areas.

But, Mr. Chairperson, this resolution is not just an exercise in expressing our concerns. This resolution is also a very important tool for assisting Myanmar itself in getting on course towards addressing the human rights violations covered by this text and achieving an inclusive restoration of democracy, as well as building the foundations for sustainable development and national reconciliation. Engagement with the UN, particularly through the Secretary-General's good

offices, as well as through cooperation with the Special Rapporteur, will be crucial for Myanmar in that regard. Adoption of this resolution is essential for paving the way for that to happen.

Mr. Chairperson, this resolution has been adopted by consensus in the past, a demonstration of the commitment of the whole of the UN membership to work with the Government of Myanmar to improve the situation of human rights in that country. We urge members of the General Assembly again to adopt this draft resolution without a vote.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.